

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Historical Materials from University of
Nebraska-Lincoln Extension

Extension

1990

G90-971 Accent on Accessories

Carol Thayer

University of Nebraska--Lincoln, cthayer1@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>



Part of the [Agriculture Commons](#), and the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#)

Thayer, Carol, "G90-971 Accent on Accessories" (1990). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 1397.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/1397>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.



Accent on Accessories

This publication describes how to select shoes, hosiery, handbags, belts, scarves, and jewelry to complement and add the finishing touches to your appearance.

Carol Thayer--Extension Clothing Specialist and Home Economics Coordinator

- [Build Your Fashion Image With Accessories](#)
- [Selecting Accessories](#)
- [Head to Toe Accessory Hints](#)
- [Remember. . .](#)

Accessories are the little things that add sparkle to your appearance; the finishing touches that complete an outfit and make it yours. Accessories can center others' attention on your best features through harmony of line, color, and texture. They can add a touch of the latest fashion.

Carefully chosen accessories can change the most basic dress to an exciting, eye-catching look in an instant. Accessories offer an easy, inexpensive way to pull a wardrobe together and make it seem like you own many more clothes than you do.

Build Your Fashion Image With Accessories

Accessories are the powerful details that help create an individual fashion image. They can add the touch that gives you a pleasing total look. Conversely, the wrong choice of accessories can destroy your overall appearance.

Whatever you wear makes a statement about you. Consider how you want other people to see you. The selections you make will determine the impression you create.

Start with a favorite outfit or garment that you feel good about wearing and add dimensions through the various accessory items such as scarves, jewelry, belts, handbags, shoes, and hosiery. The clothes and accessories you are wearing at any one time and place should have a harmony of mood, size, shape, texture, and color. They need to be related. This does not mean that there is only one way to assemble an outfit. Today's styles give freedom to put together a look that is right for each individual.

Selecting Accessories

The old rule that everything from hat to bag to shoes has to match exactly is out with today's fashion. Accessories should harmonize with each other and the outfit, but also add just the right amount of color and texture for interest.

Select accessories that will help build the right fashion image for you.

The color of an outfit and accessories is usually noticed before their other characteristics. For versatility, select garments in basic or neutral colors and then use colorful accessories, or select accessories in basic colors and design and combine them with garments of both patterned and solid colored fabrics. Accessories can contrast or coordinate, but they should be in harmony not only with each other, but also with the outfit.

Choose accessories to wear near your face from colors most becoming to you. Scarves worn on the head or hats of a contrasting color can emphasize the coloring of hair, skin, and eyes. If your coloring has decided contrasts, as with fair skin and dark hair and eyes, bright colors and striking contrasts are becoming. Pastels may appear washed out in comparison to intense coloring.

Choose accessories with becoming texture, too. Bulky accessories, such as gloves and scarves knitted of coarse yarns and rough textures, are generally considered for sport and casual wear. Smooth textures are more dressy, but may also be used in bags and shoes for casual wear.

There is no magic number of accessories to use with any one outfit. When in doubt about adding one more item, simplicity is usually the best guide to follow. Ask yourself whether the accessory complements and/or completes your image and is appropriate for the occasion.

Head to Toe Accessory Hints

Since there are no longer any strict rules or formulas for selecting and using accessories, experiment and have fun with them. Today's fashions offer many choices that allow us to select accessories that look good, feel good, and are right for our lifestyles. Let your personality and taste shine through!

Shoes

Seldom do shoes make an outfit, but wrong or shoddy-looking shoes can destroy your appearance. Shoe color and style follow garment fashion from season to season, but the shoes you wear should look good on your feet. Most important, however, is comfort. No matter how spectacular the style, a shoe is worthless if it does not fit correctly.



The classic pump is versatile and slenderizing.

Women should coordinate heel heights with hemlines. As the hemline goes down, the heel gets higher; as the hemline goes up, the heel gets lower. A medium heel makes you appear taller. Your legs also seem more attractive because the insteps of the foot has a graceful arch and the slight contraction of the calf muscle caused by the raised heel gives the calf better shape.

Basic colors and smooth, dull textures are the greatest value in shoe purchases. Basic colors include tan, taupe, cordovan, navy, brown, and black. If the shoe color is slightly darker than the skin tone, it can be successfully worn with all wardrobe items, and gives an illusion of height by extending the leg line. When the shoe color is lighter than the hemline, repeat the color somewhere else in the outfit. A contrasting color, whether bright, light, or very dark, calls attention to the foot, gives an illusion of increased foot size, and tends to make a person seem shorter.

Shoe design as well as color affects the appearance of your legs and feet. The classic pump extends the leg line and is one of the most slenderizing of all shoe styles. Straps, bows, and contrasting trim tend to widen the foot, shorten the leg line, and focus attention on the foot. A clunky shoe makes thin legs look like toothpicks and exaggerates the bulk of heavy legs.

Boots are practical for cold, wet weather. Be sure the top of the boot and skirt hem meet or slightly overlap to create a continuous line or it will shorten the silhouette.

Hosiery

Hosiery connects the shoes with the hemline of an outfit. The most versatile stocking is one that is a shade darker than your natural skin color, has a nude toe, and is heelless. It will slip into any shoe, go with any garment, and blend into the complete outfit easily.

Hosiery that is the same color as the garment and shoes will lengthen appearance and unify a look. Dark brown, black, or navy hosiery looks best with the same color clothing. Lighter colored clothes and clothes in delicate fabrics are complemented with light-colored hose and shoes.

Hosiery can emphasize the leg. The degree of emphasis depends on the distance from hemline to shoe and the hosiery color and texture. Hosiery that contrasts in color and/or texture with clothing makes the leg appear larger. Fine-textured, sheer, and slightly darker than skin color hosiery makes the leg appear smaller.

Handbags

A handbag should hold your necessities. It should be a bag to hold in your hand, not a suitcase to weigh you down. Although often purchased with shoes, a handbag no longer needs to exactly match them. Basic colors such as tan, cordovan, taupe, navy, brown, and black blend with most outfits. A handbag is a highly visible part of your total look and will definitely detract from your appearance if it is obviously inexpensive, worn out, or inappropriate.

Select a bag in a classic shape for daytime.



Consider your height and body build when you shop for a handbag. A handbag is an addition to the waist, shoulder, or hip, since that is where it is carried. A poor handbag choice can distort your silhouette.

A smooth leather bag, clutch, envelope, or soft pouch are classic bags and smart investments because they are seasonless. Straw is a good choice for spring and summer.

A smooth leather bag in a classic shape is a good selection for a daytime bag. A shoulder strap that allows it to rest at the top of your hip bone is versatile and easy to carry. A very large shoulder bag is always sporty; a small to medium sized one can be dressier.

A clutch bag is usually a bit more versatile than a shoulder bag. If you choose a very simple one in a nice leather or suede, it can go from sporty to quite dressy occasions.

Belts

Belts are both functional and decorative. They serve to define the waistline, to change the apparent location of the waistline, and to cover a waistline seam.

Belts should be scaled to a person's size and figure type. Almost any woman can wear a smooth narrow belt that blends with the color of the garment. A narrow (5/8" to 7/8") matching belt won't interrupt the vertical lines of a one-tone outfit.

A thin, long-waisted person looks wonderful in large belts with bright contrasting colors or rough textures.

Wide belts add horizontal lines and draw attention to a small, neat waist. A wide belt that contrasts with the garment emphasizes the hips and bustline, and shortens the distance between bust and hips. Wearing a belt higher than the natural waistline makes you look like you have a shorter waist.

If you are short-waisted, but tall and thin enough to afford the horizontal line of a belt, match the belt to your blouse color rather than the skirt or pant color. A belt worn below the natural waistline gives the effect of a lower waist.

A roughly textured belt, like buckskin or macrame, is sporty, while a finer grained leather denotes a dressier look. Soft crush belts are also dressy.

Large, tailored buckles tend to the sportive look. Neat, refined, smaller buckles are classics. Self-covered fabric buckles and very ornate buckles are dressy. Metal eyelets are more casual than blind eyelets that have no metal showing. Wrap-and-tie belts, such as sashes and cummerbunds, are versatile in a variety of textures, fabrics, and trims.

Scarves

Scarves are an accessory classic and do a great deal to change the look of an outfit. They are versatile because they can bring color and interest to specific parts of the body.

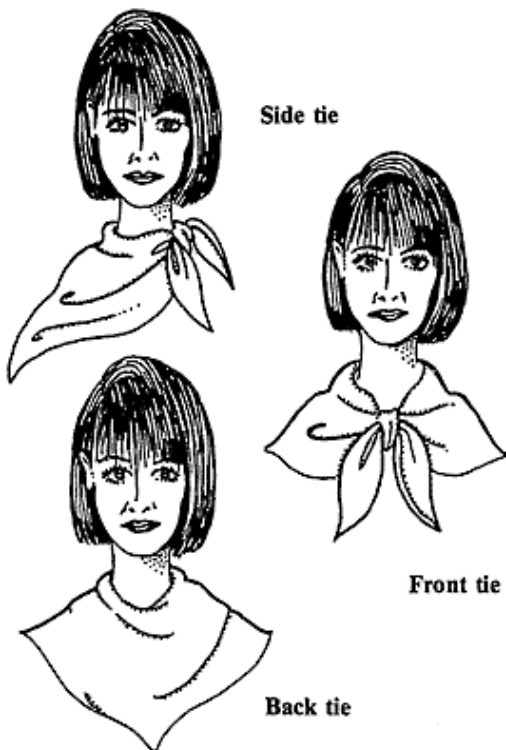
Placement of the knot affects appearance.

Scarves come in many sizes, shapes, and fabrics. Basic shapes include oblong and square. Oblong scarves are the most versatile--you can use them as mufflers, bows, ascots, to slip under a lapel, or wrap them at the waist.

Square scarves come in large and small sizes. A larger square may be difficult to wear as it takes up much room around the neck and shoulders. A small square can be used as an ascot, or tied in a bow and worn under an open shirt collar.

Placement of the knot when wearing a triangular scarf affects a person's appearance. To shorten and broaden the figure, tie the scarf on the shoulder. To shorten the neck or fill in a neckline, tie the scarf in the back. Tie the scarf in a low "V" in front to lengthen the face and neck.

In addition to length and shape, consider the fabric of any scarf you buy. If you plan to wear it around your neck, make sure that your choice is not too bulky for the length of your neck. The scarf should not be too heavy for the outfit you are wearing.



Jewelry

Never underestimate the importance of jewelry. Not only does it add a dash of distinction, but the jewelry you choose and how you wear it can become your trademark. Think of jewelry as providing the final accent for your outfit.

Select jewelry from the head down. Earrings may be the most important jewelry item. They can reflect light and flattering color onto your face.

Next, move to your neck as a focal point. If you have a large bust, focus attention upward by wearing jewelry that is closer to the base of the neck. However, avoid wearing a choker if your neck is short or heavy.

Wear long earrings and necklaces if your face is round or if you have a short neck. Small earrings and chokers are the best choice if your face or neck is long.

Rough textures and natural colors found in woods or shells are more casual and should be worn with casual clothing. Simple, understated jewelry is best for most daytime activities.

Silver and gold are appropriate for both casual or dressy occasions. Pearls highlight a woman's coloring by contrasting with the skin.

A good watch is a necessity. It should be of simple design so that it works with all of your clothes. A leather or plain gold band is most adaptable to all looks. Jeweled watches are best left for evening.

Bracelets and rings emphasize arms, wrists, and hands. A simple flat chain bracelet looks nice with or without a watch. A fitted cuff is a versatile type of bracelet. It can work with a wide variety of clothes from casual to dressy. Rings make the arms appear longer. They should be chosen to fit lifestyle, wardrobe, fingers, and skin tone. Wear no more than three rings at one time.

Remember. . .

Accessories help to build your fashion image. No outfit is complete without them. They provide you with a finished, polished appearance that underscores your individuality.

Wise accessory selection gives the satisfaction and self-assurance of being well-dressed. Variety in dress can be achieved by using accessories to express your personality, emphasize good features, and minimize poor ones.

Don't hesitate to try a new idea. Experimentation can save you money and add flair to your wardrobe.

Portions of this publication have been adapted from "Accessories--The Finishing Touch," by L. Heaton, Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service; "Accessories: Adding Dimensions," by M. Burns, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service; and "Accessories For You," by O. Haynes and N. Deyo, Ohio Cooperative Extension Service.

File G971 under: TEXTILES, CLOTHING AND DESIGN

A-6, Selection

Issued September 1985; 30,000 printed.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Elbert C. Dickey, Director of Cooperative Extension, University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension educational programs abide with the non-discrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.